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Linguistic and visual cues in counting and measuring

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Abstract

In deciding "Which has more?" of some items, we rely on cues in the environment to decide how to answer: both in the form of linguistic cues and object form. Linguistic cues may appear as a classifier or "quantizer" like "ounces" as in "Which has more in ounces?" On the other hand, object cues have to do with the form of the entity and how object-like it is. Both linguistic and object cues can present ambiguities and leave the desired dimension up for interpretation. In the two experiments presented here, we examine how people decide whether to count or measure when presented with two item sets that vary independently in both numerosity and total size. Our findings suggest that dimension selection in quantifying is a process that relies not only on one dimension, but on effects of both linguistic indications and object factors.

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